

organising the city of God in Geneva. The task was a very uphill one, for Calvin was an austere moralist of Hebrew type as well as a systematic theologian, and a large party among the restive, lax Genevans did not relish his puritanism. A reformation of manners as well as of doctrine was sorely needed in a city where vice was rampant, and Calvin was not content to rely on the moral effects of his teaching. Here, as at Zurich, the Government took in hand the reform of morals as well as of doctrine, and enforced a strict discipline. Moral or ecclesiastical offences were regarded as offences against the State, and were punishable by the State in its own interest as well as that of the Church.

Many of the citizens, whom the preacher stigmatised as Libertines, bitterly resented this Draconian infringement of their liberty, and in 1538 the party of reaction obtained the upper hand and drove both Calvin and Farel from the city. Calvin found a sphere as professor of theology at Strasburg. For the next three years his enemies were masters of Geneva ; the old license ran riot once more; the party strife between Libertine and Calvinist threw the city into tumult and anarchy until the friends of the reformer regained the upper hand, and recalled him in 1540. From September 1541, the date of his return, till his death in 1564 Calvin maintained his hold on this citadel of militant Protestantism, in spite of persistent outbursts of opposition, until he became its virtual dictator, and through it the omnipotent director of the advanced Protestant party in Western Europe.

One of his first acts was to get a number of ordinances drawn up by a committee of preachers and laymen and ratified by the Councils for the government of the Church. As at Zurich, the lay element played an important part in the consistory or presbytery, as the ecclesiastical court was called, to which was assigned the duty of maintaining ecclesiastical discipline. As at Zurich, too, the State was the right arm of the Church in the punishment of offences against discipline. Calvinistic puritanism, thus enforced by the civil power, certainly did not err on the side of clemency or moderation. In view of the rampant degeneration of Genevese morals, it may be defended as a violent remedy applied to a desperate disease. But it was inquisitorial, harsh, tyrannical, barbarous.